

From: Bob Perciasepe/DC/USEPA/US
Sent: 12/31/2011 1:48:51 PM
To: Sussman.Bob@epamail.epa.gov
CC:
Subject: Fw: Times Tribune: EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further investigation'

Note industry comments at end of article.

Interesting

Bob Perciasepe

Deputy Administrator

(o)202 564 4711

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

----- Original Message -----

From: Betsaida Alcantara

Sent: 12/31/2011 12:23 PM EST

To: Bob Sussman; Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy - Administrator; Bob Perciasepe

Subject: Times Tribune: EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further investigation'

EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further investigation'

By Laura Legere (Staff Writer)

Published: December 31, 2011

Read more: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/epa-dimock-water-supplies-merit-further-investigation-1.1251334#ixzz1i8GLXglb>

Federal environmental regulators are reopening their review of Dimock Twp. water supplies after recently released tests of the water wells taken by a natural gas drilling contractor were found to "merit further investigation."

Officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were in Dimock Thursday and Friday to visit residents whose water supplies were found by state regulators to have been tainted with methane from Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.'s Marcellus Shale drilling operations.

After a preliminary review of results from water tests taken earlier by the state, Cabot and other outside firms, the EPA wrote to the residents on Dec. 2 to say the information they had gathered "does not indicate that the well water presents an immediate health threat to users."

But in an information sheet provided to residents during visits this week, the EPA wrote that it "has recently received additional Cabot data from residents that merit further investigation." The EPA is now "concerned about" potential gaps in water sampling and test results, the number of water supplies potentially affected, if residents that need them have alternate sources of fresh drinking water, and if residents have any more data to share.

Read the fact sheet [HERE](#)

The agency is also surveying residents about the depth, age and history of their private drinking water wells.

The information will be used by the EPA to decide what steps, if any, the agency will take next in its investigation, including possibly taking its own samples from the residents' drinking water wells, according to the fact sheet.

A Cabot spokesman said the company will provide the EPA with all the data it has collected over several years.

"If there are data gaps, they exist due to lack of access, not lack of trying," spokesman George Stark said. "Cabot is confident that the water meets federal drinking water standards, and is committed to installing state-of-the-art treatment systems and resolving this matter."

EPA officials first visited the Dimock residents on Nov. 10 to gather written documentation of water tests taken by other organizations and to speak to residents who remain concerned about the quality of their drinking water.

Federal officials wrote to the families to say the tests showed no immediate health threat on the day after replacement bulk and bottled water deliveries, provided to the families by Cabot, were stopped with state approval.

But Cabot test results of the residents' water supplies that had been marked confidential in litigation between the company and 11 of the affected families were released publicly in early December, after the EPA performed its preliminary review. Those tests, taken in August and September by a Cabot contractor, showed elevated levels of metals and bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, a plasticizer commonly called DEHP. They also detected other chemicals including glycols, which are used in antifreeze, surfactants, and 2-methoxyethanol, a solvent, in the drinking water wells.

Victoria Switzer, one of the affected Dimock residents, was visited Thursday evening by EPA officials.

"Something in the water disturbed them," she said. "They were very concerned about what they were seeing."

Efforts to reach Trish Taylor, EPA Region 3 Community Involvement Coordinator, were unsuccessful Friday.

The industry group Energy in Depth, which touted the EPA's preliminary finding on Dec. 2, scolded the agency Friday for overstepping its regulatory authority in a matter over which the state has jurisdiction.

Oil and gas drilling in Pennsylvania is primarily regulated by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Energy in Depth spokesman John Krohn said the EPA's efforts this week are different than the earlier review he praised because "they're now actively going through the process of gaining new information" and have indicated the possibility of taking water tests.

"That changes the dynamics," he said.

Contact the writer: llegere@timeshamrock.com

Read more: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/epa-dimock-water-supplies-merit-further-investigation-1.1251334#ixzz1i8G4Rs1f>

----- Original Message -----

From: Bob Sussman

Sent: 12/31/2011 11:13 AM EST

To: Ex: 6 - Personal Privacy -- Administrator Bob Perciasepe

Cc: Betsaida Alcantara

Subject: Fw: Hot Site Report - Dimock GW Site

After consulting with the State and company, we started initial outreach to residents to conduct a residential well survey. This process will continue through the end of next week, at which point we will probably begin sampling well water. There has been modest press interest so far, but of course that may change when we move ahead with well sampling.

Robert M. Sussman
Senior Policy Counsel to the Administrator
Office of the Administrator
US Environmental Protection Agency

----- Forwarded by Bob Sussman/DC/USEPA/US on 12/31/2011 11:08 AM -----

From: Shawn Garvin/R3/USEPA/US
To: Bob Sussman/DC/USEPA/US@EPA, Betsaida Alcantara/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 12/30/2011 05:58 PM
Subject: Fw: Hot Site Report - Dimock GW Site

FYI...

----- Original Message -----

From: Dennis Carney

Sent: 12/30/2011 01:52 PM EST

To: R3 HOTSITES; Jon Capacasa; Humane Zia; KarenD Johnson; Judith Hykel

Subject: Hot Site Report - Dimock GW Site

Consistent with Agency plans, a residential well survey of homes in the Dimock, PA area was initiated on the afternoon of December 29th and continues. To this point, ten (10) residents have been visited and a couple more are scheduled for this afternoon. The visits are being conducted by three 2-person teams consisting of an On Scene Coordinator (OSC) and a Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC). The initial ten homes were all within the subset of 19 homes that had been incorporated in consent order and agreement between PADEP and Cabot Energy. A couple of the next scheduled visits will include residences outside of the original 19 homes. All visits have been cordial and the homeowners have been very cooperative in working with the teams to complete the well survey form. Several homeowners have also shared data they have on the water quality of their well - typically data Cabot had provided to them. Many have asked whether we intend to eventually do sampling, and have told us that they would welcome sampling and would be willing to provide access to allow the sampling to occur. This includes a couple of homes where the owners expressed basic satisfaction with systems installed for them by Cabot. Survey work will continue through today and then restart on Tuesday, 1/3/12. At this point the teams are confident that all or most residents can be surveyed by the end of next week (1/6/12). OSC Fetzer has coordinated with Susquehanna County EMA and the county will be providing some tax maps with so-called 9-1-1 addresses (as opposed to post office boxes) which should help with future scheduling of home visits. County officials are also working on getting approval from the Montrose Fire Department (approx. 5 miles from Dimock) to allow EPA to mobilize a command post to that location to facilitate local coordination and the accomplishment of field work. PADEP's Regional office has generally advised that any DEP coordination should occur with the Bureau of Oil and Gas. Concurrent with residential visits, the START contractor is working on organizing all available data so that clear evaluations of the conditions at each residence will be possible moving forward. A draft sampling plan for residential wells will be finalized today and available for use should the Agency decide as a future action that sampling is needed.

Absent any significant issue arising, the next hot site report will be provided Tuesday, 1/3/12.

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